

these terrible atrocities which included execution-style murders were just part of the larger jihad against the West, which is why he shouted “Allahu Akbar” just before opening fire. The shooter has said that by slaughtering 13 Americans, including 12 uniformed military members and 1 civilian, he was defending “the Islamic Empire” and “helping my Muslim brothers.”

In short, the Fort Hood massacre was not an episode of workplace violence. This was a terrorist attack inspired by terrorist propaganda and carried out by someone who was an agent of Al Qaeda and viewed himself as an Al Qaeda holy warrior.

Unfortunately, the U.S. Government so far has refused to give the kind of recognition that is deserved to the 12 uniformed servicemembers who gave their lives, and those who were injured on that terrible day. Part of that recognition should include Purple Hearts to the soldiers who lost their lives that day, and not given the civilian equivalent, the Medal for the Defense of Freedom, to Michael Cahill.

In other words, the U.S. Government’s official position is that this is not a terrorist attack on our own soil but instead is an ordinary criminal attack. That cannot stand. We cannot denigrate the service of those military members who lost their lives that day—and civilian hero Michael Cahill who lost his life—by saying that this is somehow workplace violence or some ordinary criminal attack. We need to officially recognize that this was a terrorist attack inspired by Al Qaeda and carried out by an agent of Al Qaeda on our own soil.

Some will tell you that Purple Hearts can be awarded to victims of a terrorist attack only if the perpetrators of that attack were acting under the direction of a foreign terrorist organization. In their view, the Fort Hood shooter does not qualify. This argument fails to take into account the evolving nature of the conflict—the global war on terrorism.

After all, Al Qaeda leader al-Zawahiri has urged his followers to conduct exactly the kind of deadly attacks that occurred at Fort Hood in 2009 and at the Boston Marathon in 2013. Al-Zawahiri believes that such “dispersed,” small-scale attacks will “keep America in a state of tension and anticipation.”

As he declared a few months ago, “These dispersed strikes can be carried out by one brother, or a small number of brothers.” In other words, it doesn’t make sense to distinguish so-called lone wolf terrorists acting on behalf of Al Qaeda from other terrorists with a more explicit Al Qaeda affiliation.

Remember, Al Qaeda doesn’t issue business or calling cards, and it doesn’t issue its staff IDs. What it does do is urge Islamic radicals around the world to pick up arms and kill Americans, and that is what Major Hasan did that terrible day 4 years ago at Fort Hood in Killeen, TX. For that matter, Al

Qaeda views American soil as a primary battleground in its war against western civilization.

When courageous members of our military lose their lives to Al Qaeda-inspired terrorists, whether it is abroad or here at home, they deserve to receive Purple Hearts, and their grieving families deserve to receive the proper benefits accorded to all men and women in our military who lose their lives in service to their country.

It should not matter whether they lose their lives in America—whether it is in New York on 9/11 or Killeen, TX, 4 years ago—or on the battlefield in Afghanistan. It should not make any difference where they lose their life as part of the effort to protect innocent life in the war on terrorism. If they are killed by a terrorist committing violence on behalf of foreign jihadists, then they are casualties in the broader war on terrorism, and they deserve to be treated as such.

Earlier this year I introduced legislation that would make the Fort Hood victims eligible for all of the honors and benefits available to their fellow U.S. servicemembers serving overseas in combat zones. My cosponsors in the House are Representatives CARTER and WILLIAMS, and they have numerous cosponsors. Today I am offering a modified version of that legislation as an amendment to the Defense authorization bill. By enacting this amendment, Congress would honor the memories of those who lost their lives at Fort Hood, and it would help their surviving family members, all of whom, as you can imagine, have experienced tremendous pain and hardship as a result of this terrorist act on our own soil 4 years ago in Fort Hood, Killeen, TX, at the hands of MAJ Nidal Hasan, an agent of Al Qaeda, to be sure, and someone who deserves the penalty of death that has been meted out by a military jury a few weeks ago.

I hope the Senate will rise up in a bipartisan way and pass this important legislation and erase these meaningless distinctions which differentiate between those who lose their lives in Afghanistan and those who lose their lives here on American soil. It is a just and well-deserved honor that these patriots have earned by their own blood, and these families deserve as a way of ameliorating some of the terrible loss they have suffered in their own service to our country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the legislation before us, the National Defense Authorization Act, and to highlight some of the many provisions in this legislation that are critical as we think about our national security and the future of our military. I chair the Readiness and Management

Subcommittee, and I understand that one of the chief challenges which faces our military is readiness. The effects of nearly 10 years of warfare on our equipment and personnel, coupled with the sharp budget reductions under sequestration, have made it more difficult for our Nation’s military leaders to prepare our forces for combat.

During our markup of the Readiness and Management Subcommittee sections of this bill, I was pleased to work with my colleague from New Hampshire, the ranking member of the Readiness and Management Subcommittee Senator AYOTTE to move more than \$1.5 billion from low-priority military construction projects into critical operations and maintenance accounts for each of our military services. This move will help mitigate the worst effects of sequestration on readiness. It is obviously not going to address the whole problem. We have a lot more work to do. Our men and women in uniform put their lives on the line for us, and we need to keep the commitment we have made that they should have the best possible training and best available equipment before we send them into combat.

I was also pleased to work with Senators MCCAIN, LEAHY, and GRASSLEY to include a 1-year extension of the special immigrant visa programs for both Iraq and Afghanistan. Special immigrant visas allow Afghans and Iraqis who worked directly with our U.S. Government and our men and women on the ground to come to the United States if their lives are in danger as a result of their service. We have heard countless stories of how these young brave men and women risked their lives to help the United States drive out violent extremists from their home countries of Iraq and Afghanistan. As we wind down our military operations, we have a responsibility to ensure that those who are in danger as a result of their faithful service to the United States are protected from harm.

Many of us are now familiar with one of these stories that has been much publicized, the story of U.S. soldier Matt Zeller and his Afghan interpreter Janis Shinwari, who served the U.S. Government for over 9 years in Afghanistan. During an attack in 2009, Shinwari not only pulled Zeller out of a kill zone to safety, he also shot two members of the Taliban who were sneaking up behind them. In doing that, he saved Zeller’s life. Following the incident, Shinwari was put on a Taliban kill list.

After many months—really years—of waiting, both Zeller and Shinwari recently reunited here in the United States thanks to this special immigrant visa program. I had the opportunity, with Senator MCCAIN, to meet the two of them in my office several weeks ago. Matt Zeller said that Janis Shinwari is his brother. He expressed how grateful he was to Shinwari for saving not only his life but all of the other members of his unit who were helped by Shinwari.

These stories are incredibly common, and I am grateful to all of our colleagues for their assistance in reauthorizing this program, not just through the NDAA bill that is before us but the short-term extension we were able to get during the government shutdown by unanimous consent in both the Senate and the House. It shows just how much we appreciate, in America, the service these men and women from Iraq and Afghanistan have given to us.

The bill before us also includes provisions from the Next Generation Cooperative Threat Reduction Act, which I introduced earlier this year. The Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Act is the most successful non-proliferation program in our country's history. The language in the underlying bill would expand the scope of Nunn-Lugar to reflect the current security environment.

Specifically, the bill requires the President to develop a comprehensive strategy to address the rapidly growing threat of proliferation across the Middle East and North Africa. The spread of nuclear weapons is one of the gravest threats we face, both in the United States and across our international community. We need to make sure our efforts to combat those challenges are coordinated and reflect where the current security challenges exist.

I am also pleased we were able to increase funding in this bill for the Department of Defense inspectors general by \$35 million. This is important because investment in our Nation's inspectors general continues to be one of the most cost-effective ways the government can work, particularly when it concerns the Department of Defense. In 2012, DOD inspectors general saved taxpayers more than \$3.6 billion, and IG efforts have been credited with a nearly \$11 return on investment for every \$1 spent. As the Presiding Officer knows, given our ongoing fiscal challenges, it is now more important than ever before we ensure every dollar is spent effectively.

Finally, I want to address the issue of military sexual assault that is tackled in this National Defense Authorization Act. It makes significant progress toward addressing the crisis of sexual assault in our Nation's military.

I commend all of the members of the Armed Services Committee who worked to tirelessly address this issue, but I want to particularly call out Senators MCCASKILL and GILLIBRAND, who have led the charge and worked to help ensure we include provisions in this act that can address this scourge on our military. Because of their leadership, we are going to pass a bill that will take historic steps toward addressing this problem.

As the Presiding Officer knows, we may have had different ideas about the best way to address the problem, but we are united in our commitment to victims of sexual assault and we will keep fighting for them.

I certainly look forward to supporting the Gillibrand amendment, the Military Justice Improvement Act, along with the Presiding Officer, because it addresses chain-of-command issues that I believe can cause victims of sexual assault in the military to refrain from reporting an incident because they fear either that nothing will be done or that there will be retaliation from their commanders. Regardless of the outcome of that legislation, it is important to reflect on the provisions that are already included in this bill because the bill before us today includes nearly 30 provisions that address sexual assault, prevention, investigation, and prosecution procedures at the Department of Defense. Almost all of these provisions were agreed to unanimously in the Armed Services Committee. Strong bipartisan support for commonsense sexual assault prevention reforms such as those included in this bill sends a powerful message to all of the members of our military, including tens of thousands of victims, many of whom have been suffering quietly for decades, that what happened to them is unacceptable and it will no longer be tolerated.

One of the critical challenges we face in the military is changing the culture surrounding sexual assault. I was pleased to work with our colleagues to include provisions in the bill to help create an environment where victims can feel safe to come forward and report these crimes.

In any organization, the best way to attract the most qualified personnel is to tie an issue to career advancement. Sexual assault prevention and response is no different. That is why Senator FISCHER and I included language that elevates the role of sexual assault prevention response officers to ensure we have the highest caliber candidates assigned to those positions.

Also, in recent months I have held roundtable discussions with New Hampshire law enforcement and with members of our University of New Hampshire community who have worked on sexual assault prevention and with members of the New Hampshire National Guard to discuss their best practices, the way in which they are working together in New Hampshire to address domestic violence and sexual assault. As a result of some of those discussions, we have included in the bill a reform that would require the Defense Department to incorporate civilian sexual assault investigation and prosecution best practices into their military procedures.

I wish to close this afternoon by thanking Chairman LEVIN and Ranking Member INHOFE for their leadership on this bipartisan bill. We still have a lot of work to do here in the Senate, but obviously the foundation has been laid by the work of the committee and by their leadership.

I also thank my staff for their incredibly hard work and dedication, as well as the staff of all of the Armed Services

Committee, because without their contributions we would not have made as much progress as we have. From the readiness subcommittee, I thank Jay Maroney, John Quirk, and Mike Noblet on the majority side; Lucian Niemeyer, Bill Castle, and Bruce Hock from the minority; and from my personal staff Chad Kreikemeier, Josh Lucas, Joel Colony, and Patrick Day.

Finally, I want to say a special thank-you to CDR Tasya Lacey. Tasya is a graduate of the Naval Academy, and she served in my office over the past year as a fellow on loan from the Department of the Navy. Her thoughtfulness and insight have been invaluable on a wide range of issues, especially during our efforts to address sexual assault. She is headed back to the Navy soon, but I wanted her to know that it truly has been a pleasure having her on my staff, and I wish her good luck in her next assignment.

Thank you very much, Mr. President. I hope we can come together in the next couple of days and get this bill done.

I yield the floor, and I note the absence of a quorum.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

MS. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MS. COLLINS. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Ms. COLLINS and Ms. KLOBUCHAR pertaining to the submission of S. Res. 303 are printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

MS. KLOBUCHAR. I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

NATIONAL PLAN TO ADDRESS ALZHEIMER'S

MR. DURBIN. Mr. President, I wish to thank my colleagues Senator COLLINS from Maine and Senator KLOBUCHAR from Minnesota for bringing the issue of Alzheimer's before the Senate for consideration with this resolution.

I ask unanimous consent to be added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 303.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MR. DURBIN. Mr. President, I might also add yesterday I submitted a resolution on the same subject and was happy to have Senator COLLINS as a cosponsor, along with several other colleagues who have joined us. They include Senators MIKULSKI, TIM JOHNSON, MENENDEZ, WICKER, MORAN, and MARKEY.

The goal—I will not go through all of the important statistics that have been related during this floor presentation by my colleagues—but our goal is to make sure the national plan which is